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Oxidation - Student Worksheet

Chemical Weathering - Oxidation



The air we breathe is not all oxygen. Indeed about $\frac{4}{5}$ of it is the gas nitrogen. The rest is oxygen and small amounts of other gases, such as argon and carbon dioxide.

If the square on the left was air, mark off and label how much of it would be nitrogen and how much oxygen.

A major source of oxygen is green plants. Oxygen finds it easy to bond with other chemicals. You have probably noticed how easily unpainted iron rusts in the open air. Many rocks contain iron. Metal coins can also age (weather) due to oxygen in the atmosphere.

Curious coins

Draw an arrow beside the picture below indicating the direction of oldest to youngest coins.

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What clues in the picture did you use to guide you?

What other clues could you have used?



Rocks are made up of minerals, which contain metal elements. These can be oxidised when exposed to the air. This process can take thousands or even millions

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of years. The lighter rusty, crusty rind on the outside of part of the rock pictured above is due to oxidation weathering.




These amazing bands of purple, red and orange colour in rock from the Hammersley Ranges are due to oxidation of beds rich in iron and manganese.



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Label the weathered and un-weathered parts of the rocks below

Picture	Comment and labels
	Dolerite (an igneous rock) from near Northam
	Yellow coastal Tamala Limestone from Fremantle
	Chert from the Pilbara.